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Contributed Notes.

The completion of the German Bible Revision undertaking is an important literary event. Although the text has not yet been published in its final form, yet its character is already known from the *Probe-Bibel*, or Trial Bible, published by the Halle Committee in 1883, from which it will differ principally only by a somewhat more modernized German. The leading feature of the work is the almost superstitious caution and conservatism shown in the matter and the method of the work. Not only have no attempts been made at a revision of the original texts, nor at changes in Luther in the interests of liberal renderings, so that the German revision offers only about as many hundred changes as the English does thousands; but more than six whole years were given to the German Bible readers to examine the revision in its tentative form before the Committee, on the basis of the papers reviewed, finished the third and last reading. The reasons for this extreme timidity in correcting the Luther text, lie partly in the strong conservative feeling pervading German religious life notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary, and to the historic position of the Luther Bible at the head of modern German literature.

G. H. S.

It is reported that Professor Hitzig, formerly the Old Testament specialist of the theological faculty at Heidelberg, among the questions put to his students, would almost invariably begin by asking: "Have you a Septuagint?" This high estimate of the value of the Version of the Seventy for the careful Bible student is, for both the Old and the New Testament work, certainly based upon the best of reasons. It is very much to be regretted that, as a tool in biblical investigation, the Septuagint is not more used than is actually the case. Whatever the perplexities and vexations of Old Testament textual criticism may be, it is certain that all are united in ascribing to the Septuagint the first position in the literary apparatus of this discipline. The principle is settled; it is only the manner and measure of the application that constitute the debatable ground. The Septuagint thus occupies the position here that the manuscripts do in New Testament lower criticism. And for the New Testament study the Septuagint is, if anything, even more important. Augustine's dictum that "the New Testament lies concealed in the Old" may have been abused by our dogmatic, unhistorical theorizers concerning the character of Revelation; however, the dictum is true in more senses than one. Particularly is this the case from a philological point of view. As for the expression of thought, the New Testament is absolutely unintelligible upon any other basis. It has been stated that it is a mistake to say that the New Testament is written in Greek; that in reality it is written in Hebrew, in other words, that the thinking of the writers was done in Hebrew. This is correct with the qualification that the language of the New Testament is the Hebrew of the O. T. filtered through the Greek of the Septuagint, and between the two the last mentioned is an indispensable connecting link. It will ever remain an interesting fact that the New Testament writers virtually "gave the additions made by the

Greek Old Testament canon to the Hebrew," yet the language of the former is the determining factor in their own. Plato and Aristotle would not have been able to understand the entire New Testament without an interpreter, and as little could they have comprehended the Septuagint throughout. Even the best of dictionaries for classic Greek will often prove to be a fatal guide for these two collections of books, and a Hebrew lexicon will serve this purpose better. Interesting illustrations of this fact can readily be found by taking words of general and wide meaning, such as *take, give, do*, and others. An examination of their uses, both alone and in combination, will show, that in the Septuagint and the New Testament, not the Greek but the Hebrew idiom was evidently before the minds of the writers. It is for this reason that Trench's masterly work on the "New Testament Synonyms," in failing to recognize this source of the New Testament vocabulary and in its constant appeals to the classic Greek, suffers from the weakness of a somewhat unhistoric method. Cremer's more ample use of the Septuagint has in this regard done an excellent service. It is a gratifying fact that the merits and importance of the Septuagint are being recognized more and more. G. H. S.

It is one of the current mistakes of the day to think that Hebrew is "a dead" language. It is no more "dead" than is the Greek. The literary intelligence published a short time ago that Ebers' biblical novel "Joshua" was being translated into Hebrew as rapidly as the installments appeared in the German, is a sure indication of the vitality of the sacred tongue. Indeed, it has been stated that the number of persons who understand and speak, at least in a jargon form, the venerable idiom of the Old Testament, is nearly as great as was the number that employed it as a medium of intercommunication in the days of Moses. Of the six and one half million Jews on the globe, more than four million are in Southeastern Europe and Western Asia; and for these, the representatives of historical and traditional Judaism, the Hebrew is not only the literary language, but in a more or less perverted form is also spoken by them. It is a well known fact that both Delitzsch's and Salkinson's Hebrew Versions of the New Testament have had circulations even exceeding the most noted works of fiction. Of the former eighty thousand copies have been printed and of the latter over two hundred thousand. These translations have been found to be the most efficient agents for gospel work among the Israelites, and are eagerly bought and read by the Eastern Jews. The number of other translations into Hebrew is quite large, including such works as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Paradise Lost*, the *Book of Enoch*, Goethe's *Faust*, the *Koran*, and even Sue's *Mystères de Paris*. A complete Hebrew Commentary on the New Testament by Lichtenberg is now being published in Leipzig. Within the past few years a regular school of Hebrew fiction has sprung up, aiming at or making a propaganda for more liberal ideas among the stagnant Judaism of the East. The leader of the movement was the late Abraham Mapar, whose leading work is his "Love Tale of Zion," a strong attack on Rabbinism. Even in the sacred city of Jerusalem, the Hebrew theatre and Hebrew theatrical literature have put up their habitation. The ultra conservative Rabbis of the city were lately not a little exercised over the production in Hebrew of a theatrical performance during the Tabernacle holidays. The subject chosen was a biblical one, and was called "Zarubabel," the players being pupils of a school conducted by Dr. Hertzberg. The only female character was acted by a young man. The piece, originally written in German, was translated into classical Hebrew by a fine scholar, Dr. Jellin.

The object of the performance was to encourage a taste for Hebrew, which is becoming much in vogue in all parts of the Holy Land. The enthusiasm of the audience rose to a high pitch in the last scene, in which the inauguration of the Temple at Jerusalem is depicted. In many of the Hebrew schools of Jerusalem and Palestine, the classic Hebrew is used throughout as a living tongue.

The periodical literature, both religious and secular, in both classical and jargon Hebrew, is large and is constantly increasing. Several Jewish journals, especially the *Hammeliz*, of St. Petersburg, have an international reputation, and for character and contents, can compare favorably with many leading periodicals of the modern tongues. *Hammagid* and *Hazefira* are also influential. Scientific and learned periodicals are best represented by *Heasiv*, edited by Sokolon, *Happerem*, by Atlas; *Ozar hassifruth*, by Graeber. The most recent prominent addition to this class of literature is, perhaps, an Encyclopædia of a general character, called *Haeshkol*, and published in Warsaw. In Jerusalem two papers are regularly published in Hebrew, the *Hazzebi*, or Gazelle, a weekly, in the interests of advanced Jewish ideas, and of the Rothschild colonies and schools, and the *Chabasselet*, or Autumnlies, the organ of the orthodox Jews, edited by Israel Back.

G. H. S.